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**TITLE: The Falklands War April-June 1982: Operation *CORPORATE* – An Example of Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea, or a *Fait Accompli* for Operational Planning?**

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### Glossary

AO	-	area of operations
ASW	-	anti-submarine warfare
CAS	-	close air support
CDO	-	Commando
COG	-	centre of gravity
C2	-	command and control
HMS	-	Her Majesty's Ship
LSL	-	landing ship logistic
MV	-	merchant vessel
OMFTS	-	operational manoeuvre from the sea
RAF	-	Royal Air Force
RM	-	Royal Marine
RN	-	Royal Navy
RW	-	rotary wing aircraft (helicopters)
SAS	-	Special Air Service
SBS	-	Royal Marine Special Boat Service
SIGINT	-	signals intelligence
SSN	-	nuclear powered submarine
STOM	-	ship to objective manoeuvre
STUFT	-	ships take up from trade
UN	-	United Nations

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** The Falklands War April-June 1982 – *Operation CORPORATE* – An Example of Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea or a *Fait Accompli* for Operational Planning?

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### Thesis:

Operation *CORPORATE* can be seen as a classic example of the conduct of operational manoeuvre from the sea that indicates the advantages of such an operational design for the conduct of expeditionary operations.

### Discussion:

Operation *CORPORATE*, analysed within the context of the United States Marine Corps doctrine of Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea, clearly indicates the advantages gained for the conduct of amphibious entry operations through adherence to the six principles of Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea: focusing on the operational objective; using the sea as manoeuvre space; generating overwhelming tempo and momentum; pitting friendly strengths against enemy weaknesses; emphasizing intelligence, deception and flexibility; and integrating organic, joint and multinational assets.

By having clear operational objectives assigned from the start of the campaign, seeking to, both directly and indirectly, target and exploit Argentinean weaknesses, as well as protect their own weaknesses, the British forces deployed to the South Atlantic were able to enable the amphibious landings at San Carlos and conduct the ground operations necessary to force the Argentinean surrender and repossess the Falkland Islands.

### Conclusion:

Operation *CORPORATE* and the way it was conducted was not a *fait accompli*. Numerous options were developed and considered for the military repossession of Britain's sovereign territories, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Only after Admiral Fieldhouse provided clear operational objectives, however, were British planners able to develop a sound operational plan. This operational plan with its achievement of all six principles of Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea, as developed by the United States Marine Corps and articulated as their main warfighting principal, illustrates for amphibious forces and operational planners the value of Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea and the benefits for conducting military operations within this framework.

"I don't mind about you, but I'm going down there to win the war."  
Rear Admiral John Woodward, RN<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

In response to Argentina's invasion of the British territories of South Georgia and the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982, Great Britain dispatched, at short notice, an amphibious task group to the South Atlantic to reinforce the British sovereignty over and regain possession of these islands. Designated Operation *CORPORATE*, the repossession of the islands was to be achieved by either demonstration of intent, or actual combat. To execute this operation, Great Britain deployed a naval task group, commanded by Rear Admiral John Woodward, RN, approximately 8000 miles. The force was required to operate over long lines of communication against an enemy that was able to use short lines of communication to reinforce its land forces from its continental mainland. The success of Operation *CORPORATE* can be seen as the classic example of the conduct of operational manoeuvre from the sea that and clearly indicates the advantages of such an operational design for the conduct of expeditionary operations.

Drawing upon a tradition of maritime supremacy and strong political will, and in recognition of the likelihood of a landing, the British forces commenced planning early to conduct an amphibious lodgment. The problem was not so much how to conduct a landing, but where and how to achieve the necessary operational environment to enable such an activity against a heavily fortified and numerically superior opponent. British planners sought detailed information about the Argentinean forces arrayed against them, about possible landing sites, and about what and how the Argentineans sought to defend the Islands. Through the identification of the key Argentinean strengths, or as Clausewitz described as the centre of gravity,<sup>2</sup> the British forces developed a plan for joint military action that targeted and reduced the Argentinean

strengths in order to enable the conduct of the lodgment and, ultimately, the defeat of Argentinean forces on South Georgia and the Falkland Islands.

It was this analysis that enabled the British commanders to translate the British government's strategic objectives into an operational plan that would re-establish British sovereignty over the Falkland and South Georgia Islands. The British operational plan sought to take full advantage of the benefits of operational manoeuvre to reduce the Argentinean centre of gravity. Given the largely maritime nature of this operation, and the restrictive land terrain of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia (see Appendix 1), this operational manoeuvre needed to occur from the sea, which caused British operational planners to develop a plan that followed the United States Marine Corps' (USMC) concept of operational manoeuvre from the sea (OMFTS).

This paper will apply the OMFTS principles to Operation *CORPORATE* in order to determine to what extent the British forces conducted the OMFTS by examining its six principles. It will also assess the extent to which Operation *CORPORATE* saw the conduct of ship to objective manoeuvre (STOM) as conceptualized by the USMC.

### **Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea**

The USMC has identified OMFTS as the key enabler for the conduct of modern amphibious entry operations, which the USMC expects to conduct as a part of its Expeditionary Manoeuvre Warfare operational concept as outlined in its cornerstone doctrinal publication, *Marine Corps Operations*.<sup>3</sup> To define the term OMFTS, it is important to understand what the term manoeuvre warfare denotes. The USMC has defined manoeuvre warfare as a:

warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope.<sup>4</sup>

In turn, the USMC has defined OMFTS as:



applying manoeuvre warfare to expeditionary power projection in naval operations as part of a joint or multinational campaign.<sup>5</sup>

OMFTS therefore is the use of the maritime environment to achieve manoeuvre and deliver a shattering blow to the enemy's cohesion through rapid and unexpected action. OMFTS' six principles enable the achievement of this rapid and unexpected action. The six principles are: focusing on the operational objective; using the sea as manoeuvre space; generating overwhelming tempo and momentum; pitting friendly strengths against enemy weaknesses; emphasizing intelligence, deception, and flexibility; and integrating organic, joint, and multinational assets.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Objective of Operation *CORPORATE***

The history of occupation in the Falkland Islands and claims for sovereignty date back to 1540, with Spain, Britain, and finally Argentina all claiming sovereignty of the islands (see Appendix 2). The overarching rationale for Britain to repossess the Falkland Islands and South Georgia was that Britain maintained legitimate sovereignty over the islands and that Argentina had violated that sovereignty with an act of unprovoked aggression, which was a clear violation of international law.<sup>7</sup> The invasion of the Falklands by Argentina forced Britain, under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's leadership, to act against Argentina, to defend the sovereignty of British territory, and to repossess the islands by declaring Britain's right for self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter (see Appendix 3) and immediately dispatched forces, which included submarines, to the South Atlantic in the days immediately prior to the 2 April 1982 invasion.<sup>8</sup> Britain sought immediate action in the UN as well, and scored a diplomatic victory on 3 April 1982, when the UN passed Security Council Resolution 502 (see Appendix 4) that called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Argentinean forces from the Falklands and South Georgia. Argentina's prompt refusal to abide by the resolution fortified

Britain's claims of legitimacy for action.<sup>9</sup> Inaction by the British military would have been seen as a failure of Thatcher's increasingly unpopular government<sup>10</sup> and would have had significant strategic implications for Britain as a world power.

In 1982, the Argentinean military junta of President Leopoldo Galtieri seeking to create political stability for his government saw the issue of the Falklands sovereignty as a political solution. Galtieri and his senior officers, Navy Admiral Jorge Anaya and Air Force Brigadier-General Basilio Lami Dozo, planned the military occupation of the Falkland Islands if the negotiations with Britain regarding the sovereignty of the Falklands failed to resolve the issue.<sup>11</sup> However, what Martin Middlebrook called the Argentinean "gamble" was the misguided belief that Britain would not conduct a military operation to re-capture the Falkland Islands, and that the UN and the US would not act in support of the British claim of sovereignty.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the crisis Britain maintained the primacy of a diplomatic solution and sought to use diplomatic, informational, and economic means to achieve diplomatic solution.<sup>13</sup> The United States, through the efforts of Secretary of State Alexander Haig, made considerable efforts as well to resolve the crisis and seek a peaceful solution under UN auspices, but was unsuccessful. Consequently, British military planners developed their operational plan in order to meet the British strategic goal of regaining possession of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.

Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, the British Commander-in-Chief Fleet, who was the overall operational commander of all British forces deployed to the South Atlantic (i.e., Task Force 317 (TF 317)), developed his basic operational plan and communicated it to his subordinate commanders on 17 April 1982. The admiral's subordinate commanders included: Rear Admiral Woodward, Commander Task Unit 318.1 – the "Carrier" group

Brigadier Julian Thompson, RM, land forces commander, 3 CDO Brigade and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions of The Parachute Regiment, until the arrival of Major General Jeremy Moore, RM, (with the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Scots Guards, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Welsh Guards and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles, commanded by Brigadier Anthony Wilson), and Commodore Mike Clapp, RN, the amphibious group commander.

In his operational plan, Admiral Fieldhouse sought:

the establishment of a sea blockade around the Falklands; the repossession of South Georgia; the gaining of sea and air supremacy around the Falklands; and the eventual repossession of the Falklands.<sup>14</sup>

The appreciation conducted by Admiral Woodward and his staff on their way to Ascension Island identified that the key threat to the Task Force was the Argentinean ability to interdict the Task Force as it approached the Falkland Islands. Debate still raged, however, over the most dangerous means the Argentineans would use (i.e., either by air or sea, using either surface warships or submarines) to do so...<sup>15</sup> Plans were developed to counter this looming threat with the expectation that there would be some form of naval combat if war commenced.<sup>16</sup>

Since Admiral Fieldhouse's forces did not discern or clearly state a Clausewitzian operational centre of gravity as a part of their planning,<sup>17</sup> and only the centers of gravity proposed by Nevin being the Argentine forces on the Falkland Islands for Argentina and the Naval forces for Britain have been identified,<sup>18</sup> an example centre of gravity construct for Argentinean forces and the British forces in accordance with Australian doctrine<sup>19</sup> has been compiled therefore for analysis of the principles of OMFTS for the conduct of the Operation *CORPORATE* (see appendices 5 and 6). In this analysis, the Argentinean strategic centre of gravity is the will or stability of the Argentinean junta lead by Galtieri to continue to pursue sovereignty over the Falklands. The Argentinean operational centre of gravity is assessed as the

Argentinean ability to deny British amphibious operations (see appendix 5). Conversely, the British strategic centre of gravity is their ability to maintain international legitimacy in the repossession of the Falkland Islands. The British operational centre of gravity was assessed as being its ability to project military power (see Appendix 6).

### **British Achievement of Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea**

In assessing whether the British forces conducted Operation *CORPORATE* as OMFTS, it is important to analyse the conduct of the operation and its four key elements – the blockade, the capture of South Georgia, air and sea supremacy, and the repossession of the Falkland Islands – against the six principles outlined in MCDP 1-0. The following paragraphs provide that analysis.

**Focusing on the operational objective.** Throughout the campaign to repossess the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, the British forces remained focused on the operational objectives outlined by Admiral Fieldhouse in his 17 April 1982 communication to conference with his deployed commanders. All British operations conducted to achieve each of the four elements of this operational plan had distinct milestones that worked towards the achievement of the overarching British strategic goal of forcing the withdrawal of Argentinean occupation forces from the Falklands.<sup>20</sup>

Initial strategic and operational plans involved actions against the Argentinean mainland, especially Special Forces raids against Argentinean mainland Air Force bases and actions against Argentinean forces outside the Falkland Islands area of operations (AO). One can argue that the conduct of the actual operations, however, focused on the Falkland Islands AO. These operations were designed to support Admiral Fieldhouse's four elements and achieve manoeuvre in the South Atlantic. Operations were conducted on the Argentinean mainland associated with the "Chilean Sea King" incident that resulted from the aborted Operation *MIKADO* that did see the

landing of British Special Forces in Tierra del Fuego to observe and conduct a raid against the nearby Argentinean Air Force bases at Río Grande.<sup>21</sup> These operations were minor in nature, but they had the potential to draw Argentinean forces and focus away from the Falklands just as the British forces conducted their landing operations. It is important to note though that all of these operations were considered support to the achievement of the operational objectives and were not designed to compete against the achievement of these goals.

Throughout the conduct of British operations, the focus of every effort was toward regaining the Falklands and South Georgia sovereignty. Planners and commanders sought to ensure that all operations were focused on achieving this objective despite the temptation to take action in other locations, such as the Argentinean mainland or against the Argentinean fleet that remained within Argentinean territorial waters. This operational focus reflected the British COG analysis and ensured the legitimacy of all British operations. At the same time, operational focus enabled the targeting focus to remain on those assets that had been identified as weaknesses of the Argentine COG and further the conduct of the British operations.

**Using the sea as manoeuvre space.** Perhaps the closest corollary between the British operational plans and OMFTS was the use of the sea as manoeuvre space. This occurred in the establishment of a sea blockade; repossession of South Georgia; achievement of both air and sea superiority in the Falklands AOA; and, the conduct of the amphibious operations conducted as Operation *SUTTON* (i.e., the landing of British land forces on the Falkland Islands at San Carlos).

Britain's early declaration and establishment of a total exclusion zone around the Falkland Islands prevented the Argentinean Navy from interfering in the conduct of operations to repossess the Islands which effectively rendered the Argentinean Navy a "fleet in being" and

operationally ineffective.<sup>22</sup> The Royal Navy achieved this by the threat of action and the conduct of action when the submarine HMS *Conqueror* sank the Argentinean Cruiser *Belgrano* on 2 May 1982, southwest of the 200 nautical mile exclusion zone. The sinking of the *Belgrano* was a strategic and operational act<sup>23</sup> with regards to the effect it had on Argentina. The sinking of the *Belgrano* had the potential to jeopardize the British COG by undermining the political legitimacy of the operation and the British claim of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. This was because the sinking of the *Belgrano* could be viewed as a provocative and unnecessary act and outside the intent of Article 51, as well as the UNSCR 502. The situation was further exacerbated because the *Belgrano* was actually outside the declared exclusion zone when it was sunk. The demonstration of this capability and willingness to use it has been held as largely responsible for the Argentinean Navy playing no further part in the conduct of the Argentine defence of the Falkland Islands and relying on the Air Force to support the Argentinean land forces and to interdict British naval forces. It achieved the first element of Admiral Fieldhouse's operational plan, the sea blockade, and enabled the achievement of the remaining elements.<sup>24</sup>

Once the surface threat from the Argentinean Navy had been neutralized, the British fleet was able to position itself near the Falklands in order to prosecute all subsequent objectives and to protect itself from the Argentine air threat. The reduction of the Argentinean naval ability to support its land forces on the Falklands meant, as well, that it had to rely upon air transportation assets solely. Argentina's inability to provide heavier forces and equipment to its forces already based on the Falkland Islands meant their potential strength was reduced further.<sup>25</sup>

To execute the landing operation, Operation *SUTTON*, the British maritime elements conducted very thorough planning and analysis of landing options. Ultimately, planners headed the advice of Major Ewen Southby-Tailyour, former Officer Commanding the Royal Marine

garrison on the Falklands, and chose to conduct the landing on East Falkland at San Carlos.

Although a number of different options were analysed (see Appendix 7), San Carlos was chosen because the British planners concluded early that a frontal assault would be extremely risky and jeopardize the operation. An un-opposed landing at San Carlos based upon both the assessment of likely landing locations and the Argentine dispositions on the Falkland Islands offered the most likely chance of success.<sup>26</sup>

The British forces actively targeted the Argentine CVs as identified in the Argentinean COG construct (see Appendix 5) to enable them to use the sea for manoeuvre. Specifically, they targeted the Argentine Air Forces' limited-range fighter aircraft by forcing them to adopt tactics that were unsuited to the ordnance they delivered – the potential threat of air-launched Exocet missiles and conventional bombs. This was achieved by forcing the Argentinean aircraft to both try and attack the Task Force at the edge of their capable range, and at this range to try and force the Argentinean aircraft to dogfight (something that they did not have the fuel to do\_ and by positioning the British ships in locations where the Argentinean aircraft flying low were unable to utilize their weapons as designed, therefore reducing their effectiveness to the point of failure. The British, also, denied the Argentinean naval forces the ability to move within striking range of the British fleet elements, especially its aircraft carriers, by targeting their lack of ASW capability and the range of surface-launched Exocet missiles. Bad weather not only limited the Argentinean ability to use maritime air forces in early May but also forced the Argentine fleet back into Argentinean territorial waters which opened the South Atlantic to the British fleet with a reduced risk of interference and gave them freedom of movement around the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.

**Generating overwhelming tempo and momentum.** To generate an overwhelming operational tempo for the Argentinean forces, the British sought to create multiple simultaneous situations for the Argentineans overload their decision making and execution capabilities, which targeted their critical vulnerabilities of command and control (see Appendix 5).

Initially, the British Government achieved this operational tempo through two strategic decisions: one military, the early and rapid dispatch of forces to the South Atlantic; and two diplomatically, the tabling of the document that became the UN Security Council Resolution 502 (see Appendix 4) immediately after the Argentinean occupation of the Falkland Islands, on 3 April 1982.

At the operational level of war, TF 317 achieved the desired operational tempo through the early and active reconnaissance of a number of different landing sites throughout the Falkland Islands by British Special Forces (the SAS and the SBS), the conduct of simultaneous offensive actions to support the conduct of the actual landing, and the conduct of the actual landings at multiple locations at San Carlos as a part of Operation *SUTTON* (see Appendix 8).<sup>27</sup> The overland campaign also sought to create indecision for the Argentinean forces attempting to defend the Falkland Islands with limited support from the Argentinean command in Buenos Aires by overcoming the distances and terrain quickly, and through the coordinated movement of the land forces to encircle Stanley. The operational tempo advantage was maintained also by striking before the Argentinean forces on the Falklands believed that the Task Force had arrived in the South Atlantic and was within range. This was achieved through the RAF Vulcan "Black Buck" operations in early May 1982 that demonstrated British military power and resolve prior to the arrival of the land forces. Subsequent Harrier operations against Argentinean positions contributed to the maintenance of tempo by ensuring that pressure was kept on the Argentinean



forces prior to the landings and to ensure the Argentines were unsure of British intentions. At the same time, the British sought to attrite the Argentinean forces and lower Argentinean troop morale.

**Pitting friendly strengths against enemy weaknesses.** The British forces also achieved lowering Argentinean morale as they sought to use their strengths against Argentinean weaknesses. It was assessed early that any operation on land would be most likely conducted against a numerically superior enemy so it was key for the British forces to reduce this advantage as much as possible.

One way the British achieved this was by following the Argentinean invasion through the use of RN nuclear powered submarines (SSNs) deployed to establish the maritime exclusion zone and to shadow Argentinean ships. The Argentines did not have a capability to adequately counter this British threat to their naval forces and the British took advantage of this, especially after the demonstration of the SSN potency with the sinking of the *Belgrano*. By pitting the superior strength (SSNs) of the British maritime force against the Argentinean weaknesses (ASW capability), the British were able to deny the Argentinean navy the ability to influence the conduct of the land operation or to prevent the British from being able to use the sea as manoeuvre space to conduct Operation *CORPORATE*. This defeated the Argentine COG of being able to prevent an amphibious landing as identified in the Argentine COG construct (see Appendix 5); numerous options were open for the British to pit their strengths against Argentinean weakness. The use of SSNs to track and target the aging Argentinean fleet denied it the ability to interdict the British amphibious landings. Whereas, the use of intelligence and EW assets to identify and track the locations of Argentine submarines through their transmissions exploited Argentinean weaknesses further so that this information could be used to enhance the

force protection of the British fleet. Finally, Britain's exploitation of the reputations of her "elite" forces – the SAS, SBS, Royal Marines and Parachute Regiment, and not the least the Gurkhas – highlighted the weaknesses of a primarily conscript Argentine conscript force (except for the small number of Argentine Marines located near Stanley such as those the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of The Parachute Regiment defeated at Wireless Ridge) and pitted a strength – well trained, lead, experienced and equipped professional soldiers – against a weakness – less well trained, badly lead and badly equipped conscript forces.

Admiral Fieldhouse's task force also sought to target the weaknesses of Argentinean C2, especially its link between its strategic and operational C2 through reinforcing the Argentinean belief that the British would not attack the Falkland Islands to recapture it and that all efforts would be diplomatic.<sup>28</sup> The swift recapture of South Georgia exploited this Argentinean belief and dispelled it, immediately. Moreover, the recapture of South Georgia shocked the Argentinean junta and forced it to realize that not only had Britain deployed military forces to the South Atlantic but also the British were willing to conduct land operations to liberate South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. The capture of South Georgia also gave the British a potential land base in the South Atlantic from which they could conduct protracted operations against Argentina as well as support forces deployed for an extended period of time.

**Emphasizing intelligence, deception and flexibility.** Throughout the Falklands War the British actively sought to use intelligence, deception and flexibility to disrupt the Argentinean forces and protect their own vulnerabilities that have been identified in the COG construct (see Appendix 6).

Intelligence played a key role in the operational fight, even if British strategic intelligence agencies and the Foreign Officer were criticized savagely for not recognizing the onset of the

crisis by the British media.<sup>29</sup> The decision to actually launch military forces towards the South Atlantic came from intelligence analysis prior to the Argentinean landings on 2 April 1982. The use of SIGINT played a significant role, as well, in the conduct of the military operational planning for the remainder of the war, especially in the disposition and locations of Argentina's naval forces.<sup>30</sup>

Deception was able to be taken advantage of early by the British at a strategic level through a sympathetic domestic public media that falsely reported the maritime platforms that were to be dispatched, or had been dispatched, to the South Atlantic. An example was the reporting that the SSN, HMS *Superb*, had been ordered to the South Atlantic while it actually remained in the North Atlantic before sailing discretely into its home port of Falsane in Scotland on 17 April 1982. This meant that the Argentineans had to plan on it being in the South Atlantic and disperse their forces accordingly.<sup>31</sup>

The British used strategic and operational deception throughout the war. At the strategic level this was accomplished through the publishing of different names of vessels that had sailed by the British media.<sup>32</sup> At the operational level planning to threaten mainland Argentinean Air Force bases through the conduct Operation *MIKADO* and the possibility that it may have actually been involved in some form of attack against the air bases in southern Argentina accomplished this.<sup>33</sup> Deception operations were conducted also to support the landing with Operation *TORNADO* that saw the conduct of multiple operations designed to deceive the Argentineans as to where and where the landings would occur and included the leaking of false information, air and naval bombardments on the Falklands, Special Forces actions, as well as the use of public relations strategies at the strategic level.<sup>34</sup> The SAS also attacked on the Argentinean forces at Darwin in the first action of Operation *SUTTON*. Brigadier Thompson intended for this action to

distract the Argentine forces close to San Carlos and at Goose Green so as to prevent them from interfering with the conduct of the landing operation.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the operation, the British maintained a degree of flexibility, except that they were unable to modify the timing of the operation. Had the British been required to maintain the task force in the South Atlantic without landing for a protracted time frame, flexibility would have been lost as there would have been requirements to return the British carriers to the United Kingdom and to commence a rotation system that would have significantly hampered their ability to retake the Falklands. British forces, therefore, had to take full advantage of the time they had to maintain their operational flexibility. By specifically targeting the Argentine security weaknesses as identified in the COG construct (see Appendix 5), British forces leveraged their decision making to overcome force limitations to prosecute operations against the Argentinean forces and successfully exploit Argentine divisions, especially the confused C2 systems at the operational and tactical levels.

**Integrating organic, joint, and multinational assets.** In order to conduct the repossession of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia the British actively sought to integrate all force elements available. This was difficult to achieve with many RAF elements due to the distances involved and the limited availability, as well as capability, of aerial tankers. Nevertheless, TF 317 accomplished this by integrating maritime and land forces and enabled the creation of a fully integrated landing force with a single objective. This was achieved through the RAF's "Black Buck" strikes against the Stanley airstrip and the integration of RAF Harriers onto the RN carriers, HMS *Hermes* and *Illustrious*.

There was no direct involvement or integration of multinational assets during Operation *CORPORATE*. The availability and support provided by the US for the provision of Ascension

Island, along with the provision at short notice of certain weapon systems, especially the sale of AIM-9L *Sidewinder* missiles, and the offer to "loan" a ship (HMNZS *Canterbury*) by New Zealand in support of RN ships in the South Atlantic were the main ways that multinational assets were integrated.<sup>36</sup>

Perhaps the most important element of how the British forces achieved successful integration was through the establishment of a clear command and control system and chain of command for the conduct of Operation *CORPORATE*. Its early establishment and the early designation of the different commanders and their relationships to each other and responsibilities to each other enabled planning to be effective and maintain a single goal in accordance with the operational objectives set by Admiral Fieldhouse to achieve a unity of effort, vital for the conduct of the operation.

**Achievement of OMFTS.** The British forces did not plan on conducting OMFTS as a deliberate course of action. Nevertheless, the prosecution of the operational plan to recapture the Falkland Islands and South Georgia from Argentina clearly indicates that the principles of OMFTS were achieved. The means of the actual victory that should be laid at the actions of the land, maritime, and air forces deployed to the South Atlantic; the achievement of these principles must certainly be looked at as having contributed greatly to the operational success. It highlighted also the requirement for joint operations to take full benefit of the principles of OMFTS and to ensure that an operational plan designed to dislocate the main enemy potential strengths could be achieved to enable the successful prosecution of the operation.

The British achieved OFMTS through their use of their maritime assets, especially their submarines and naval air power to prevent the Argentinean forces from being able to interfere in the conduct of the operational plan. Had the British forces not been able to reduce the

Argentinean navy to a "fleet in being" or been unable to prevent the Argentinean air forces from interdicting their maritime and land operations, a successful landing on East Falkland would have been in doubt.

### **Ship to Objective Manoeuvre**

Ship to Objective Manoeuvre is how the USMC intends to conduct OMFTS at the tactical level and sees this as an option to be able to conduct an "amphibious attack." STOM focuses on the force deploying directly to the operational objective, rather than simply on getting the force ashore in order to then act against the operational objective as would occur with a "traditional" style amphibious entry operation by creating a beachhead and then breaking out from the beachhead to act against the operational objective.<sup>37</sup>

During the planning for the landing on the Falkland Islands a number of different options and locations were considered. It was decided early on that there would not be a deliberate attack directly at the Argentinean forces on the Falklands due to the assessed risks of such an operation, but that the Task Force would conduct an un-opposed landing elsewhere, consolidate forces ashore, and then attack the Argentinean land forces.

One of the early options proposed was to conduct an assault into the bays surrounding Stanley followed by a direct assault on the Argentinean positions. To carry out this assault British forces would have had to conduct landings at Cow Bay and Uranie Bay to the north of Stanley. Planners, however, quickly dismissed the plan due to grave concerns about the ability to be able to get the required artillery ashore quickly to support the assault and the risk of a strong Argentinean counter-attack before sufficient forces were ashore.<sup>38</sup> As the objective was the capture of Stanley, had this option been selected it may actually have seen the conduct of STOM

by TF 317 in the repossession of the Falkland Islands because the lodgment would have moved directly against the main objective and not through stages elsewhere.

The deliberate decision to attack overland towards Stanley from San Carlos also indicates a more conventional amphibious operation in accordance with MCDP 1-0 *Marine Corps Operations* (see Appendix 9) and is not indicative of an amphibious attack. Given the original intent of landing and using helicopter support intended to be provided by the RAF Chinook helicopters lost with the MV *Atlantic Conveyor*, this loss of capability meant that the land forces were required to conduct an overland march to Stanley and that even if the British had wanted to act directly against Stanley, that they were largely unable to given the limited RW lift assets available to support the land operations. Through the conduct of these operations TF 317 sought to continue to conduct OMFTS in order to support the main advance with the subsequent amphibious operation to land the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade at Bluff Cove and Fitzroy during the period 6-8 June 1982.<sup>39</sup>

## Lessons

The successful British operation to repossess the Falkland Islands and South Georgia in 1982 has been used to draw many lessons, both for the conduct of amphibious operations, as well as for the conduct of modern warfare, especially modern maritime warfare.

The major lesson to be drawn from the conduct of Operation *CORPORATE* in regards to OMFTS is the importance of the joint operation for OMFTS. Without an integrated joint environment the successful conduct of OMFTS has the potential to be limited in its ability to achieve its operational goals because different elements of the force may seek to achieve different operational objectives that do not support the overall operational objectives. The importance of having a clearly defined operational plan and objectives that Admiral Fieldhouse

articulated to his senior deployed commanders prior to their sailing for the South Atlantic from Ascension Island cannot be underestimated. By stating these operational objectives early the deployed commanders had clear guidelines to which they could refer to ensure that all of the operations that they conducted in the area of operations were designed to support the achievement of the repossession of the Falklands.

The role of deception operations to support the operation was key factor in the success of Operation *CORPORATE*, at both the strategic and operational levels. Through the use of a coordinated deception plan the British were able to ensure that the Argentinean forces were unsure as to what units, especially the British SSNs, had been deployed to the South Atlantic, as well as how and when the British forces were going to conduct their landings on the Falkland Islands. The role of the "Chilean Sea King" incident further highlighted the value of the British deception operations because it forced the Argentinean forces to consider and act against the very real threat of British Special Forces ashore on mainland Argentina in close proximity to Argentinean Air Force bases because of the potential such actions had of undermining the Argentinean public support of the junta.

The conduct of Operation *CORPORATE* placed a great emphasis on the importance of amphibious forces and the value of aircraft carriers, and a greater focus towards and expeditionary capability by the British military that had become focused on its assigned roles and responsibilities for NATO. Operation *CORPORATE* also gave the US many lessons for the conduct of amphibious operations, especially how a sea blockade can enable the conduct of OMFTS.

Even though the lesson of the viability of the philosophy of OMFTS had been proven, the decision not to conduct a STOM type entry operation by the British forces does not mean that



this concept is unsound. Rather it indicates that given the Argentine dispositions, the assessed Argentine strengths, and the British forces analysis of what they could actually achieve meant that when all options for the repossession of the Falkland Islands were considered, that an option to conduct STOM was impractical and an unacceptable risk.

The major lesson that control of the sea and limited air superiority is what enabled the British forces to conduct operational manoeuvre using the sea for manoeuvre that otherwise may have been denied to them by the Argentineans. Only through reducing the Argentinean Navy to a "fleet in being" were the British able to achieve this, therefore, the lesson for the conduct of OMFTS today is that the control of the sea and air superiority are vital for OMFTS to be effective.

## **Conclusion**

Operation *CORPORATE* and the way it was conducted was not a *fait accompli* for operational planning but was the end result of careful planning that sought to minimise the threat of the Argentinean forces in the recapture of the Falklands. Numerous options were developed and considered for the military repossession of the British sovereign territories of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia but only after the clear operational objectives were provided by Admiral Fieldhouse, were the planners able to develop a sound operational plan.

Admiral Fieldhouse's operational plan and the way that it achieved the six principles of OMFTS as developed by the United States Marine Corps, as its main warfighting principle, provides a clear lesson for amphibious forces and operational planners of the value of OMFTS and the potential benefits from conducting military operations within this framework. The achievement of OMFTS requires a joint force focused on a single operational goal and can only be conducted as long as the sea is controlled – both sea and air – to enable the conduct of

manoeuvre. Without this the ability to manoeuvre will be lost that will significantly reduce the ability to conduct an entry phase of an operation without the potential for significant risk to the force.

The conduct of the Operation *CORPORATE* did not alleviate the requirement to conduct conventional land operations against a well established and defended enemy over inhospitable terrain. Without the successful conduct of actions that met the principles of OMFTS, the ability to even land on the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic may very well in itself been unattainable by the British forces. In this sense, OMFTS must be seen as the vital enabler for the conduct of operations to establish forces ashore to achieve clearly articulated operational objectives designed to meet a strategic goal. It is the coordination of all of the principles, involving all services and elements of the military, supported by other government agencies, combined with an accurate and well developed analysis of both an opponents and own strengths and weaknesses that will enable the success of such an operation for the future.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Trevor Royle, *Collins Dictionary of Military Quotations*. Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991, 176.
- <sup>2</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Trans and ed. Howard, Michael and Peter Paret, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, 619.
- <sup>3</sup> Headquarters United States Marine Corps, *MDCP 1-0 Marine Corps Operations*, Washington DC: Department of the Navy, 2001, 2-14.
- <sup>4</sup> MCDP 1-0, F-13.
- <sup>5</sup> MCDP 1-0, 2-15.
- <sup>6</sup> MCDP 1-0, 2-15 – 2-16.
- <sup>7</sup> Her Majesty's Stationery Office, *The Disputed Islands – The Falkland Crisis: A History and Background*. London UK: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982, 33.
- <sup>8</sup> Martin Middlebrook, *Operation CORPORATE: The Story of the Falklands War*. London: Viking, 1987, 64.
- <sup>9</sup> Middlebrook, 62.
- <sup>10</sup> David Monaghan, *The Falklands War: Myth and Countermyth*. New York: St Martin's Press Inc., 1998, Monaghan, 1.
- <sup>11</sup> Middlebrook, 31.
- <sup>12</sup> Middlebrook, 36-37.
- <sup>13</sup> Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 34.
- <sup>14</sup> Middlebrook, 94-96. Quotation on 96.
- <sup>15</sup> Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Reasons in Writing: A Commando's View of the Falklands War*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 1993, 139.
- <sup>16</sup> Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle For The Falklands*. New York NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 1983, 138-139.
- <sup>17</sup> The identification of the desire for the development and identification of a centre of gravity was articulated in British Military doctrine with the publication of the *British Military Doctrine* on 1989. British Army, *Design for Military Operations - The British Military Doctrine*. UK: Chief of the General Staff, Army Code 71451, 1996, Forward & 84.
- <sup>18</sup> Michael J. Nevin, *The Falkland Islands – An Example of Operational Art?* Carlisle PA: US Army War College, 1986, 11-12.
- <sup>19</sup> Australian Army, *Land Warfare Procedures – General (LWP-G 0-1-4) The Military Appreciation Process*, Puckapunyal: Commonwealth of Australia, 2001, 3-35 – 3-38.
- <sup>20</sup> Valentine, William D. Jr., *Leveraging Technology: Using the Practical Essence of Operational Art to Translate information into Decisions*. Newport: Naval War College, 1995, 5.
- <sup>21</sup> Sir Lawrence Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Vol II*. Abingdon UK: Taylor & Francis Inc, 2005, 432-440; and Middlebrook, 192-193 & 432-434; & Nigel West, *The Secret War for the Falklands: The SAS, M16, and the War Whitehall Nearly Lost*. Polmont: Little, Brown and Company, 1997.
- <sup>22</sup> Steven R. Harper, *Submarine Operations During the Falklands War*, Newport; Naval War College, 1994, 8.
- <sup>23</sup> Middlebrook, 147.
- <sup>24</sup> Freedman, 305.
- <sup>25</sup> Freedman, 202.
- <sup>26</sup> Middlebrook, 196; & Peter Calvert, *The Falkland Crisis: The Rights and the Wrongs*. London UK: Frances Pinter (Publishers) Limited, 1982, 83-84.
- <sup>27</sup> Freedman, 462; and Julian Thompson, *No Picnic: 3 Commando Brigade in the South Atlantic: 1982*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1985, 57.
- <sup>28</sup> Mark Adkin, *Goose Green: A Battle is Fought to be Won*. London: Cassel & Co., 1992, 78.
- <sup>29</sup> Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 34; & Freedman, 18.
- <sup>30</sup> Middlebrook, 66.
- <sup>31</sup> Marshall Cavendish, Ltd., *The Falklands War*. Vol 1. London: Marshall Cavendish, Ltd., 1983, 28; & Middlebrook, 65.
- <sup>32</sup> Middlebrook, 74.
- <sup>33</sup> Middlebrook, 193; & Smith, Gordon, *Battle for the Falklands*. London: Ian Allan Ltd, 1989, 70.
- <sup>34</sup> Freedman, 462-463.
- <sup>35</sup> Marshall Cavendish, Ltd., Vol 6, 174.

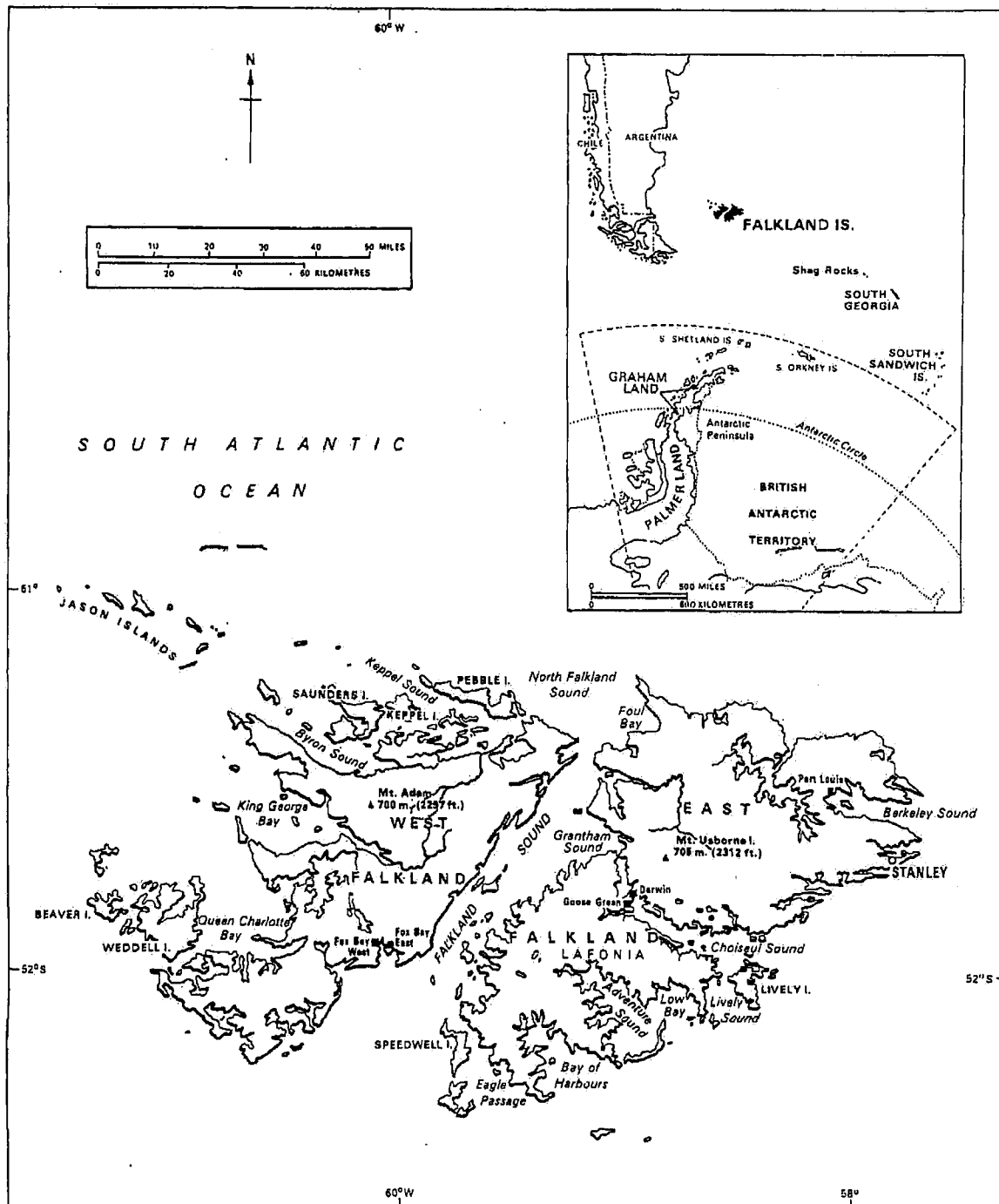
<sup>36</sup> Edmund Yorke, "'The Empire Strikes Back'? The Commonwealth Response to the Falkland Conflict', in Stephen Badsey, Rob Havers and Mark Grove (eds.), *The Falkland Conflict Twenty Years On: Lessons for the Future*. Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2005, 186.

<sup>37</sup> MCDP 1-0, 2-16 – 2-17. The difference between ship to shore movement and STOM are explained diagrammatically at Appendix 9.

<sup>38</sup> Marshall Cavendish, Ltd., Vol 5, 149.

<sup>39</sup> Middlebrook, 300-301.

## Appendix 1 – The Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)



The Falkland Islands are located approximately 500 kilometers to the east of the tip of Cape Horn in the South Atlantic and South Georgia is located a further 1290 kilometers east-south-east of the Falkland Islands. The South Atlantic position means Falklands experience a harsh weather pattern with continual winds and generally low temperatures with averages ranging from  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $10^{\circ}\text{C}$  with overcast conditions dominant. The physical geography of the Falkland Islands is a series of stunted mountainous areas with relatively light vegetation, boggy areas and rugged coastlines covering approximately 12,000 square kilometers. The island of East Falkland is less severe in geography than West Falkland, and the surrounding other approximately 340 smaller islands generally exhibit features similar to the main island to which they are closest. The major settlements on the islands during the war were at Stanley and Goose Green, both of which are on East Falkland, and both of which were key considerations for the British operational planners.

Sources: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, *The Disputed Islands – The Falkland Crisis: A History and Background*. London UK: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982, 1, 16-17, 27; & Ian J. Strange, *The Falkland Islands – 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* Trowbridge: David & Charles Inc., 1983, 17, 32-35.

## Appendix 2 – Chronology

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
1540	- Possible sighting by Spanish ship based upon description of Fox Bay
1690	- Captain John Strong in the <i>Welfare</i> lands and names Falkland Sound after Viscount Falkland, the Treasurer of the Royal Navy
1764	- First French settlement in the Falkland Islands
1765	- Captain John Byron claims “The Falkland Islands” as property of King George III
1766	- First British permanent settlement
1767	- Spain objects to French settlement on the basis that the islands were a part of the “offshore group” of the Spanish mainland colony. France hands over settlements and the name of Malvinas adopted by Spain
1769	- Spanish ship finds British settlement
1770	- Spain forcibly removes British settlement
1771	- Spain recants and allows British settlement after threat of Britain dispatching a naval force. Spain proclaims that this does not give Britain sovereignty of the Falkland Islands
1774	- Britain withdraws settlement but leaves a plaque maintaining British sovereignty to the Falkland Islands
1775	- Captain James Cook claims South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands for Britain
1810	- Argentina established
1816	- Argentina claims all former Spanish possessions in the South Atlantic including the Falkland Islands
1826	- Argentinean settlement established in the Malvinas
1831	- USS <i>Lexington</i> under Captain Silas Duncan evicts Argentinean settlement and claims the Falkland Islands as being “free of all government”
1832	- Argentina reestablishes settlement in the Malvinas
1833	- HMS <i>Clio</i> under Captain John Onslow forces Argentineans to leave the Falkland Islands and present British community established at Stanley
1947	- Britain offers to submit the issue of Falkland Island sovereignty to the International Court of Justice. Not accepted by Argentina
1955	- Britain submits the issue of sovereignty to the International Court of Justice applying for redress of Argentinean encroachments. Removed from the court in 1956
1960	- UN adopts the policy document “A Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples”
1965	- Argentina requests the UN intervene in the Falklands dispute but recommends no more than that Britain and Argentina proceed to negotiations under Resolution 2065 and votes against intervention because the people of the Falkland Islands wanted to remain a part of Britain and had exercised their right to “self-determination” to that effect
1966	- Britain and Argentina discuss the Falkland Islands – no result
Jul 76	- Shackleton Report published identifying the possibility of oil near the Falkland Islands

- 1977 - Britain dispatches a task force to the South Atlantic over concerns that Argentina may attempt to seize the Falkland Islands
- 1976-80 - Continued talks between Britain and Argentina but issue of sovereignty unresolved
- Jul 81 - Britain announces its decision to withdraw the HMS *Endurance* from the South Atlantic
- 19 Mar 82 - Argentinean contractor Constantino Davidoff's party raises the Argentinean flag on South Georgia. Britain raises a diplomatic protest to the Argentinean government
- 29 Mar 82 - Argentine fleet puts to sea for "exercises" with Brazil and Uruguay
- 2 Apr 82 - Argentina invades the Falkland Islands
- 3 Apr 82 - UN Resolution 502 calling for the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Argentinean forces from the Falklands
- 5-6 Apr 82 - Main elements of British Task Force sail from the UK.
- 7 Apr 82 - Britain declares 200 NM Maritime Exclusion Zone around the Falkland Islands. Argentina reinforces the Falkland Islands. British Task Force sails to the South Atlantic
- 21-25 Apr 82 - British re-capture South Georgia
- 1 May 82 - RAF Vulcans bomb Port Stanley
- 2 May 82 - HMS *Conqueror* sinks the Argentinean Cruiser *Belgrano*
- 4 May 82 - HMS *Sheffield* sunk by Argentinean Air Force
- 15 May 82 - British SAS raid Pebble Island
- 21 May 82 - British 3 CDO Brigade lands at San Carlos
- 25 May 82 - HMS *Coventry* and MV *Atlantic Conveyor* sunk by Argentinean Air Force
- 28 May 82 - Battles of Goose Green and Darwin
- 8 Jun 82 - Elements of British 5 Brigade land at Bluff Cove. LSL *Sir Galahad* sunk by Argentinean Air Force
- 11 Jun 82 - Elements of British 3 CDO Brigade capture Mounts Harriet & Longdon and the Two Sisters
- 13 Jun 82 - Elements of British 5 Brigade captures Mounts William & Tumbledown and Wireless Ridge
- 14 Jun 82 - Argentinean forces on the Falkland Islands surrender

## **Appendix 3 – United Nations Charter Article 51**

### **Article 51**

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.



## Appendix 4 – United Nations Resolution 502

### United Nations Resolution 502 (1982) of 3 April 1982

*The Security Council,*

*“Recalling* the statement made by the President of the Security Council at the 2345<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council on 1 April 1982 calling on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to refrain from the use or threat of force in the region of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas),

*Deeply* disturbed at reports of an invasion on 2 April 1982 by armed forces of Argentina,  
*Determining* that there exists a breach of the peace in the region of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas),

1. *Demands* an immediate cessation of hostilities;
2. *Demands* an immediate withdrawal of all Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas);
3. *Calls* on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to seek a diplomatic solution to their differences and to respect fully the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

*Adopted at the 2350<sup>th</sup> meeting by 10 votes to 1 (Panama), with 4 abstentions (China, Poland, Spain, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)*

### Decision

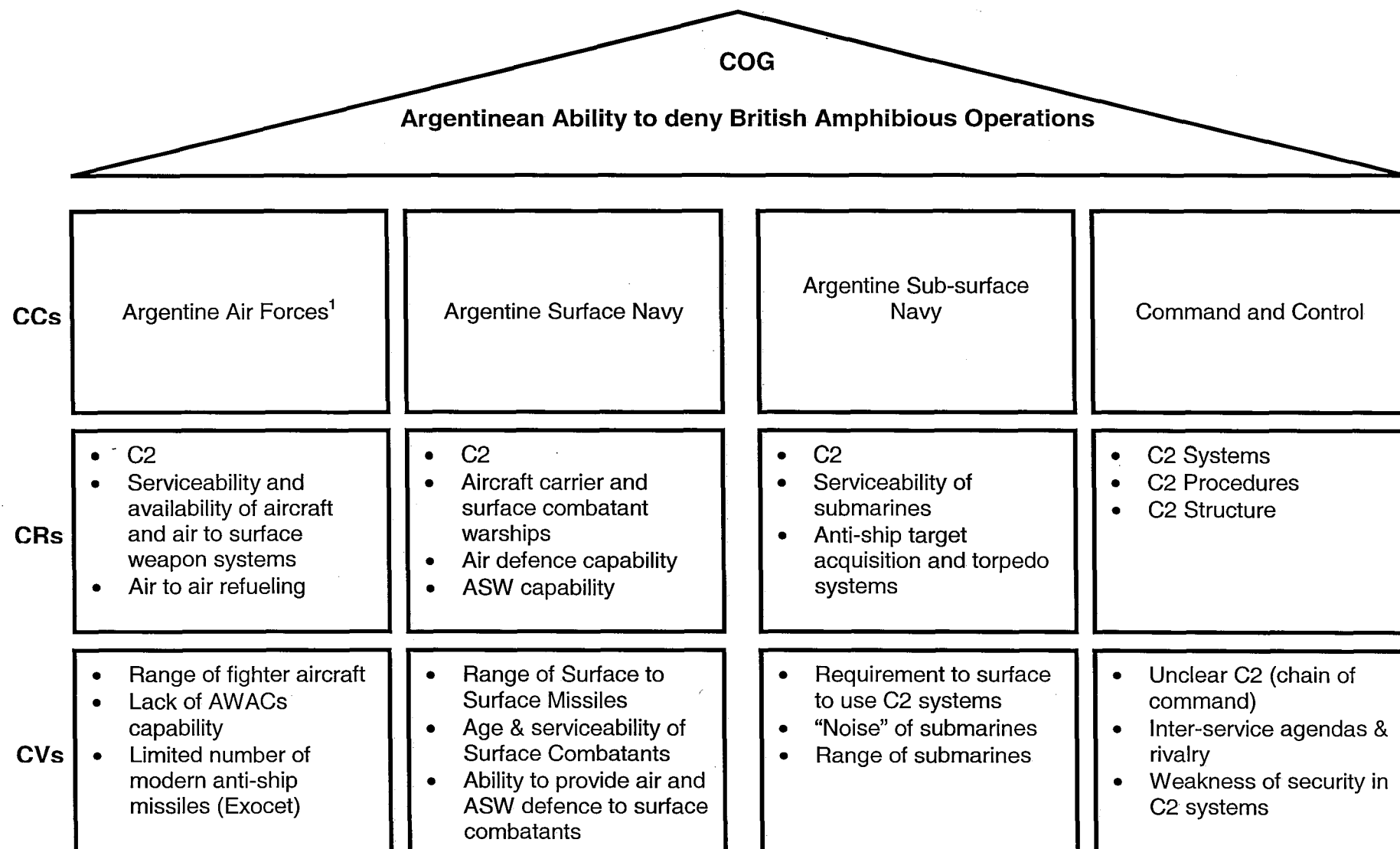
On 5 May 1982, following consultations of the Council, the President of the Council announced that he had been authorized to issue the following statement on behalf of the members of the Council:

*“The members of the Security Council express deep concern at the deterioration of the situation in the region of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) and the loss of lives.*

*“The members of the Security Council also express strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General with regard to his contacts with the two parties.*

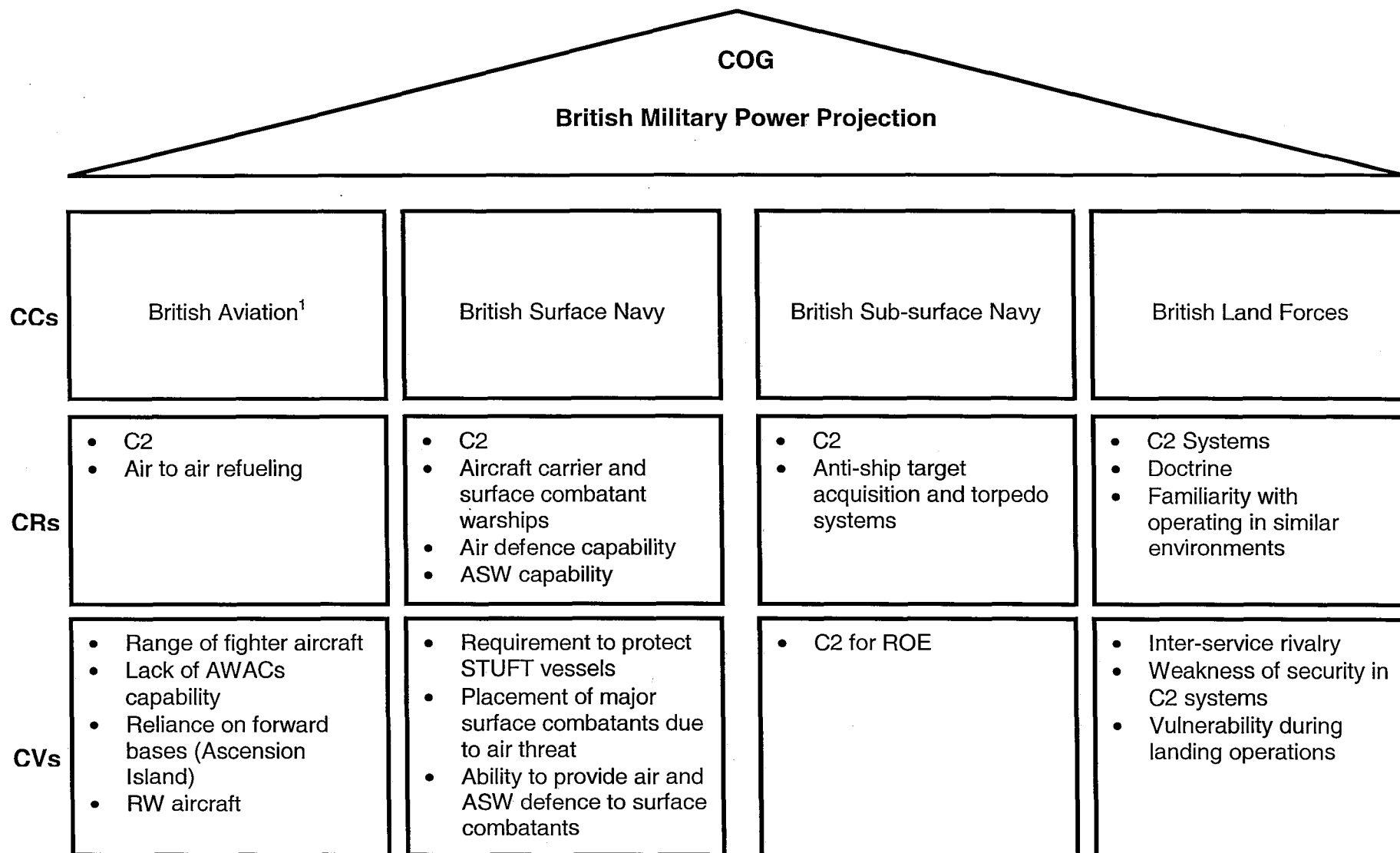
*“The members of the Security Council have agreed to meet for further consultations tomorrow, Thursday, 6 May 1982.*

# Appendix 5 – Assessment of the Argentinean Operational Centre of Gravity (COG)



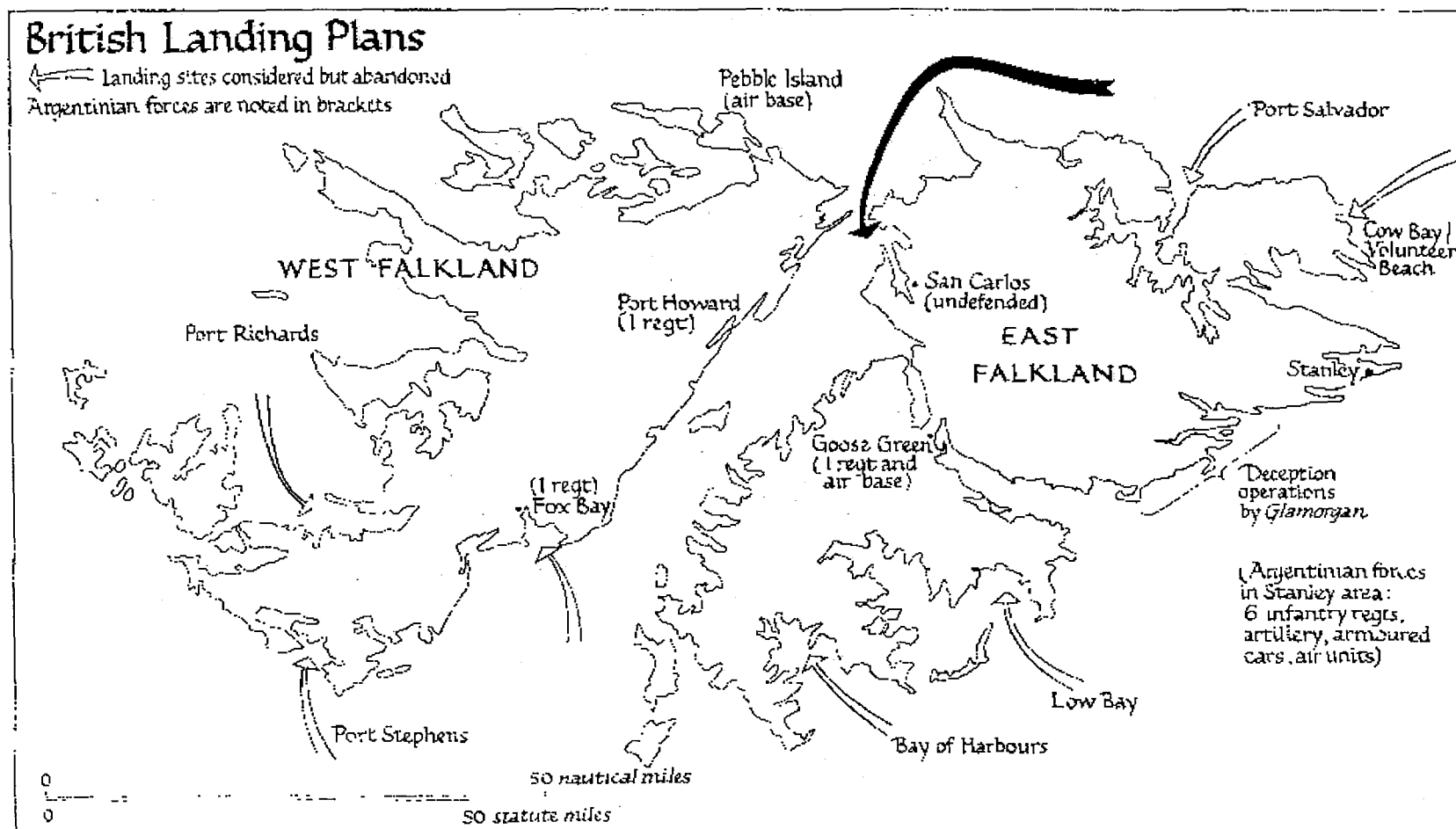
Note: Includes Argentine Naval Aviation

## Appendix 6 – Assessment of the British Operational Centre of Gravity (COG)



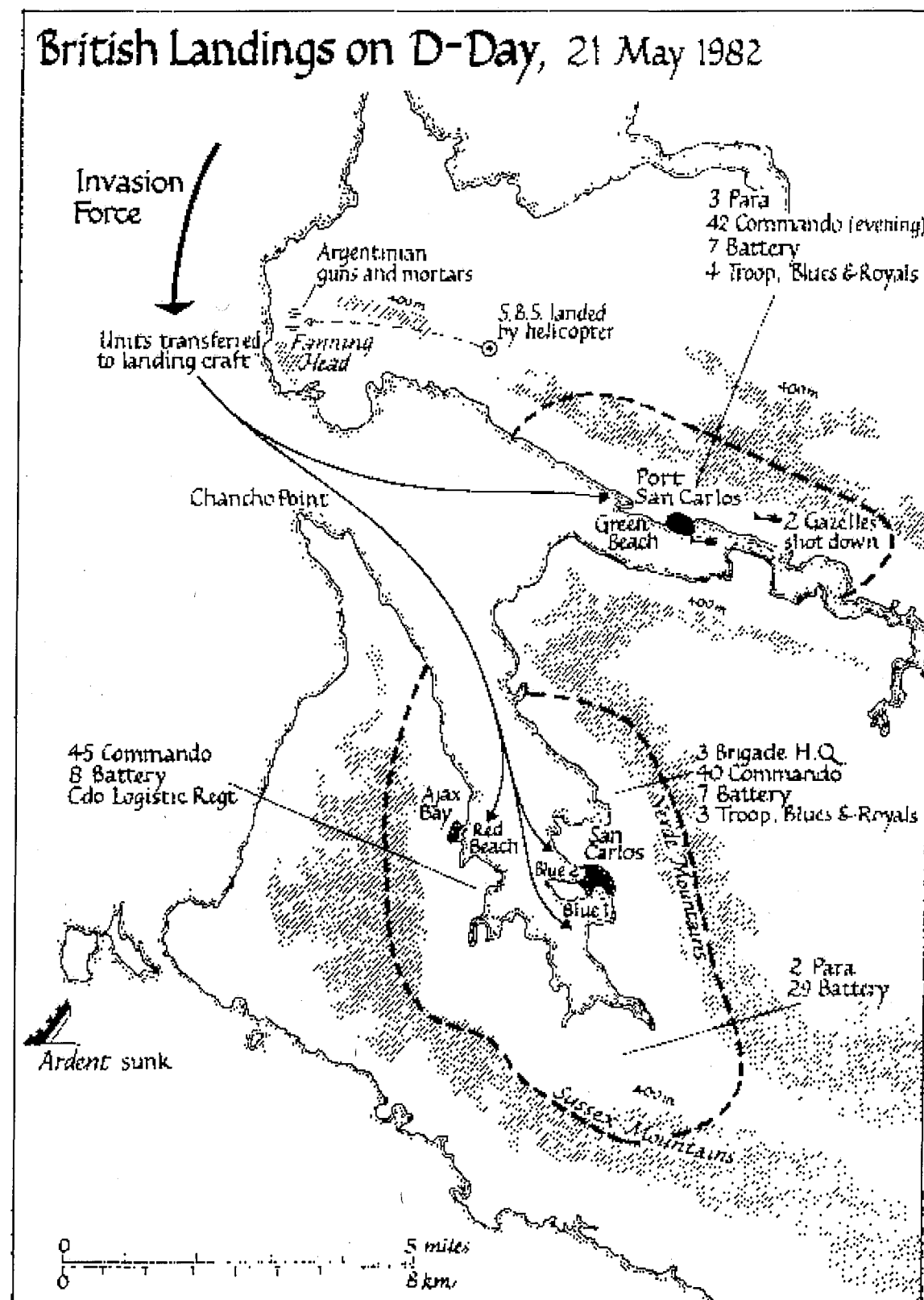
Note: Includes British Naval Aviation, RAF Harriers deployed to the Task Force, and RAF Strike Aircraft (Vulcans) based at Ascension Island

## Appendix 7 – British Landing Plans

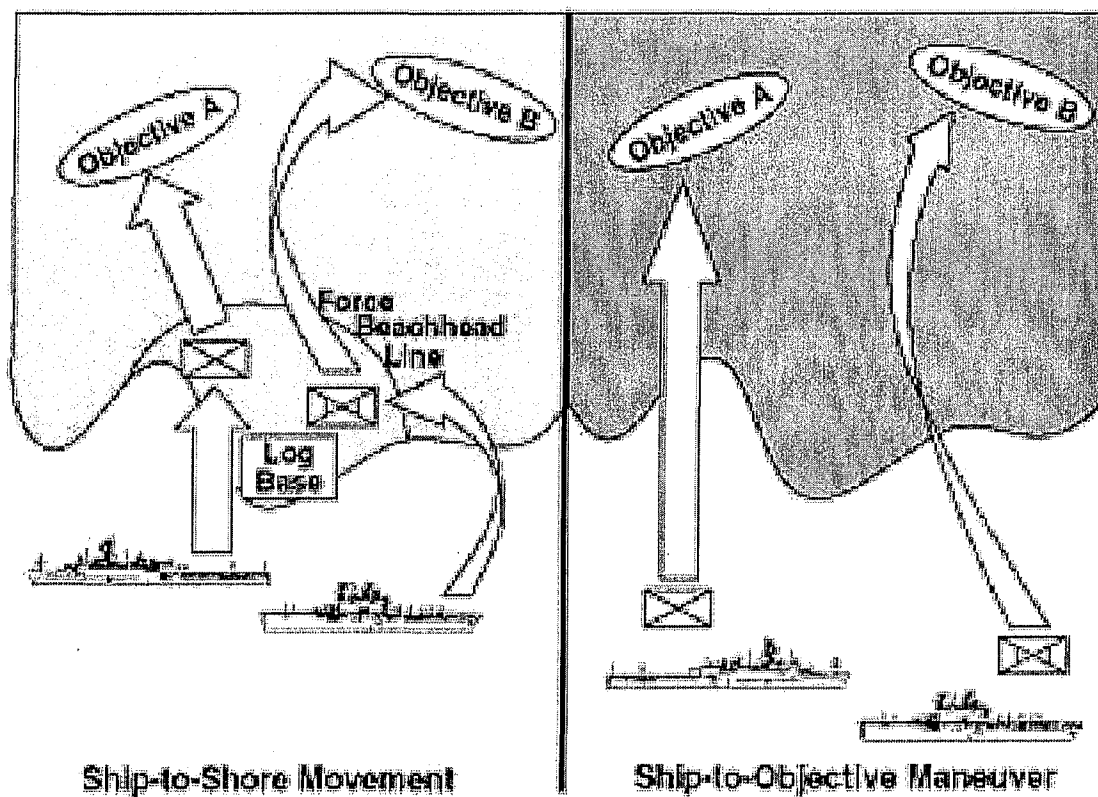


Source: Martin Middlebrook, *Operation CORPORATE: The Story of the Falklands War*. London: Viking, 1987, 197.

## Appendix 8 – British Landings – D-Day – 21 May 1982



## Appendix 9 – Ship to Objective Manoeuvre (STOM)



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